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# Canada's Female Labour Force



One of a series from the 1976 Census of Canada



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**Demography Division**      **Division de la démographie**

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the 1976 Census of Canada

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## Introduction

Women of today constitute a large and increasing portion of Canada's labour force. The term "labour force" refers to persons 15 years and over who, in the week prior to June 1, 1976, were employed or unemployed (for details see Statistics Canada, 1976 Census of Canada, Introduction to Volume 5, Catalogue 94-800, 1979). The 1976 Census reported that close to four million women were working or seeking jobs. This figure is more than three times the number 25 years ago, and almost 14 times that of 1901. Many of today's women no longer stay home to do the household chores and to look after the children all the time. An increasing number of them are also working outside the home.

### Canada's female labour force: One of the fastest growing

The recent growth of the female labour force in Canada is even more dramatic when compared with some other industrialized countries. Between 1951 and 1971, the Canadian female labour force increased by 161.5%. In comparison, the female labour force in the United States grew by 91.3% between 1950 and 1970.

### Why is it growing?

Many factors have contributed to the marked rise in the Canadian female labour force over the years. These include the rapid growth in service-producing industries together with the changes in occupational trends; better employment practices and improvements in maternity leave; increased education and vocational training; the rise in urbanization; the decrease in family size and the improvement in the provision of day care facilities. Also, many women enter the labour force because they wish to maintain or improve their families' standard of living. These factors

Much of the growth in the proportion of women in the labour force has occurred in this century. They formed only 14.8% of Canada's total labour force in 1901; this increased to 22.0% by 1951 and to 37.8% by 1976. Numerically, the most dramatic increase took place between 1961 and 1976 when the number more than doubled from 1.8 million to 3.9 million, for an increase of 117.8%. The corresponding labour force growth rate for men was only 34.8% (from 4.7 million to 6.4 million).

Of particular interest is the fact that more and more married women are joining Canada's growing female labour force. Their participation rate in the labour force increased from 22.1% in 1961 to 43.7% in 1976.

During approximately the same period, Sweden's female labour force increased by 41.6%; the United Kingdom's, by 32.1%; West Germany's by 21.8%; and France's by 15.6%. Part of the rapid increase in Canada's female labour force can be attributed to its smaller initial participation rate compared to the above countries.

were reinforced by an increasing awareness of economic and social inequality between the sexes.

What are the demographic and social characteristics of the female labour force — age, marital status, education? How many mothers are the sole wage-earners and how young are their children? How do the incomes of working women compare to those of their male colleagues? To what extent have women been able to find jobs in industries and occupations which once were occupied only by

men? Is the high rate of unemployment in recent years a result of the rapid entry of females into the labour market or is high unemployment simply due to the fast growth in the total labour force plus changing economic conditions?

The following facts are revealed about Canada's female labour force by censuses and other data:

- Nearly one-half of all women 15 and over are in the labour force in 1976.
- In recent years they have been entering the labour market at a fast rate, while the rate for men has slowed down.
- Nearly two-thirds of women in the labour force are married, the majority are in the younger age groups and they tend to have fewer children than those not in the labour force.
- Almost one-half of all separated and divorced women with young children are either working or seeking jobs.
- Women have higher unemployment rates than men at most ages.
- They work in a narrower range of industries than men and almost one-third of them are engaged in clerical or related occupations.
- Men have higher average annual incomes than women. Some of this difference is accounted for by full- or part-time work and length of work experience.

# The Changing Face of Labour



## Increasing proportion of women join the labour force

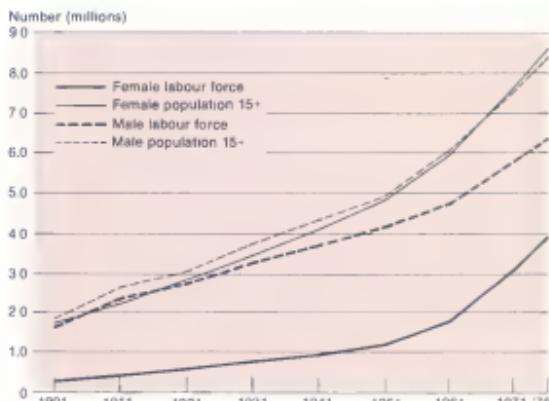
The remarkable rise in the labour force activity of females can be seen in their participation rate (defined in the footnote to Table 1). This rate shows that an increasing proportion of the female population 15 and over are entering the labour force. In 1901, 16.1% of adult females were in the labour force; this proportion grew to 29.7% by 1961 and to 44.8% by 1976. For

most of that period the participation rate for men has been steadily declining.

The growth in the female labour force can be attributed to two factors: the fast growth in the female population 15 and over, and the decision by more and more females to enter the labour force.

Chart 1

### Growth of the Labour Force and Population 15 Years and Over by Sex, Canada, 1901-1976



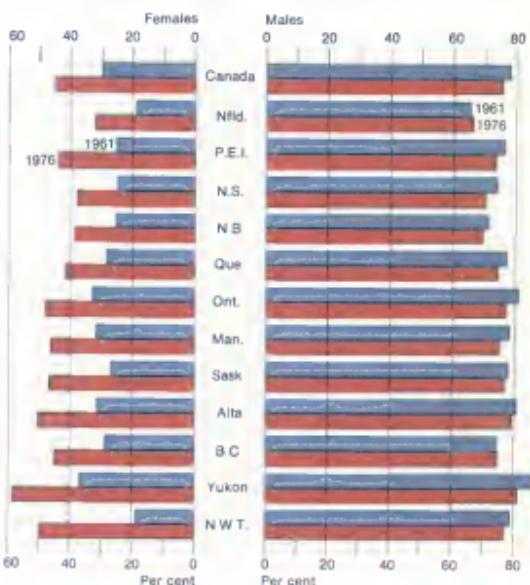
Note: (a) Excluding Newfoundland for the period 1901-1941  
Labour Force

(b) 1901-1941 data based on population 14 years and over.

(c) 1951-1976 data based on population 15 years and over

Source: (i) Denton, F. T. and Ostry, S. 1967, *Historical Estimates of the Canadian Labour Force, 1961 Census Monograph, Catalogue 99-549*, Tables 3, 4, 5 and 10  
(ii) 1971 Census of Canada, Catalogue 94-702, Table 2  
(iii) 1976 Census of Canada, Catalogue 94-804, Table 9.

Chart 2

Labour Force Participation Rates by Sex,  
Canada and Provinces, 1961 and 1976

Source. (i) 1971 Census of Canada, Catalogue 94-702, Table 2 for 1961  
(ii) 1976 Census of Canada, Catalogue 94-804, Table 9 for 1976

## Urban job opportunities

Urban women have a slightly higher labour force participation rate than rural women. The urban population was defined by the 1976 Census as those persons living in an area having a population concentration of 1,000 or more and a population density of at least 1,000 per square mile (386 per square kilometre). The rural population consists of those persons living outside "urban areas". Of all urban women 15 and over, 45.7% were in the labour force compared to 42.6% of all rural women.

This same pattern exists for all age groups, except for those 65 and over. The higher participation rate for urban women is to be expected since there are greater job opportunities in urban communities. Many of the jobs women do, such as white-collar, trade and service jobs are also concentrated in urban areas. In addition, more readily available day care facilities in urban areas may make working outside the home easier for mothers with young children.

Table 1

**Female and Male Labour Force  
Participation Rates,<sup>(1)</sup> Canada,  
1901-1976<sup>(2)</sup>**

	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961	1971	1976
Females	16.1	18.6	19.9	21.8	22.9	24.1	29.7	39.9	44.8
Males	87.8	90.6	89.8	87.2	85.6	84.0	78.1	76.4	75.6

<sup>(1)</sup>Participation rate is the percentage that the total labour force (employed plus unemployed) forms of the population 15 years of age and over.

<sup>(2)</sup>1901-1941 data based on population 14 years and over. They exclude Newfoundland. 1951-1976 data based on population 15 years and over.

Source: Same as for Chart 1.

### Provincial variations

Labour force participation rates for women differ among the provinces. In 1976, for example, Newfoundland had the lowest participation rate (31.9%) while Alberta had the highest rate (50.0%). The rate for Ontario was 47.8% and Quebec 41.2%.

The growing impact of women in the labour force is reflected in all the provinces. But some provinces have undergone more rapid changes than others. Between 1961 and 1976, the female participation rates in Prince Edward Island, Saskatchewan, Alberta,

British Columbia, the Yukon and Northwest Territories increased faster than the national rate. Although the fastest growth occurred in the Yukon and Northwest Territories, the total size of the female labour force in each of the two territories was very small. Quebec had the smallest change in participation rates. For males, participation rates decreased in all the provinces except in Newfoundland and British Columbia where they remained almost the same over the 15-year period.

# Portrait of the Employed Woman



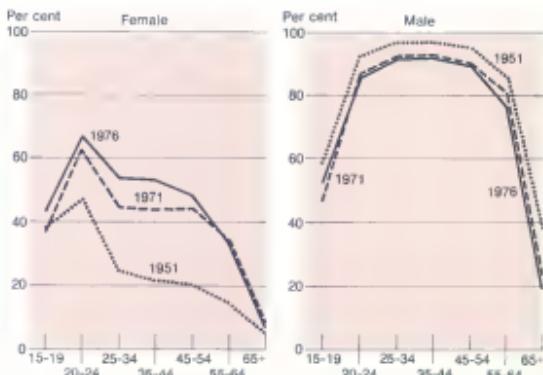
More and more women of all ages go out to work

Since 1951, the fast growth in the female labour force has been reflected at all ages. Women between 20 and 24 have the highest participation rates, while the most rapid increase in rates has occurred for those between 35

and 44. The rates have also grown relatively fast for the 45-54 age group. This is not surprising since many more women are returning to the labour market once their families have grown up.

Chart 3

Labour Force Participation Rates by Sex and Age, Canada, 1951, 1971 and 1976



Source: (i) 1971 Census of Canada, Catalogue 94-702, Table 2 for 1951 data.  
(ii) 1976 Census of Canada, Catalogue 94-804, Table 9 for 1971 and 1976 data.

It is interesting to observe that in recent years, the participation rates for the oldest groups have been decreasing. For example, between 1971 and 1976, for the 55-64 and 65+ age groups, the rates dropped slightly from

34.4% to 33.6% and from 8.3% to 6.9%, respectively. This trend may be a result of earlier retirement or involuntary withdrawal from the labour market during periods of high unemployment.

Marriage and women workers

Marital status is one of the major factors affecting the labour market activity of females. After marriage and during their child-rearing period, many women stop working outside the home. As a result, their participation rate is substantially lower than that for any marital status group

in the labour force except the widowed.

On the other hand, marriage for men has the opposite effect; married men have the highest participation rate among all marital status groups.

Table 2

Numerical Distribution and Participation Rates (PR)  
of Female and Male Labour Force by Marital Status, Canada, 1976

	Married				Widowed		Divorced	
	Single		(including separated)		No.	PR	No.	PR
Females	1,202,845	56.5	2,403,055	43.7	155,350	18.1	117,445	63.8
Males	1,735,090	65.6	4,495,560	82.1	53,550	28.2	91,760	76.9

Source: 1976 Census of Canada, Catalogue 94-804, Table 10

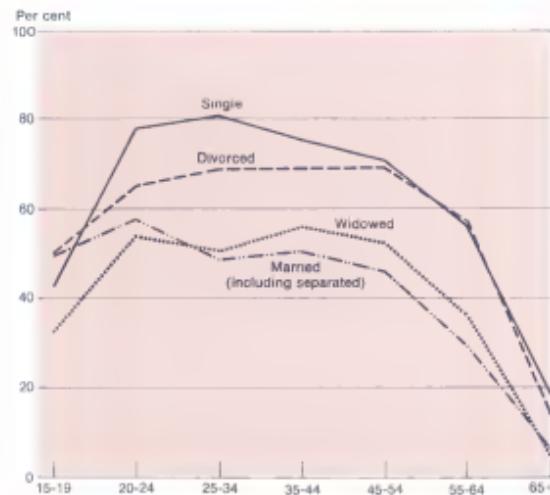
Married women form the largest group of all working women

Numerically, married women and married men form the largest groups in the work force. In 1976, 2.4 million of the female workers and 4.5 million of the male workers were married. Married females, however, have a lower participation rate (43.7%) than single or divorced females. Also, their participation rate is much lower than the rate for married men (82.1%).

Although a relative decline in the participation rate is noted for married women between 25 and 34, a rise is recorded for those women between 35 and 44 as some return to work when their children are of school age. In recent years, however, marriage has become less and less important as a factor influencing women to leave the labour force.

Chart 4

Female Labour Force Participation Rates by Marital Status and Age, Canada, 1976



Source: 1976 Census of Canada, unpublished data

Many separated and divorced women with pre-school children active in the labour force

A relatively low participation rate is recorded by widows. This is not surprising since many of them are in the older age groups and have retired from the labour force. On the other hand, divorced women experience a considerably higher labour

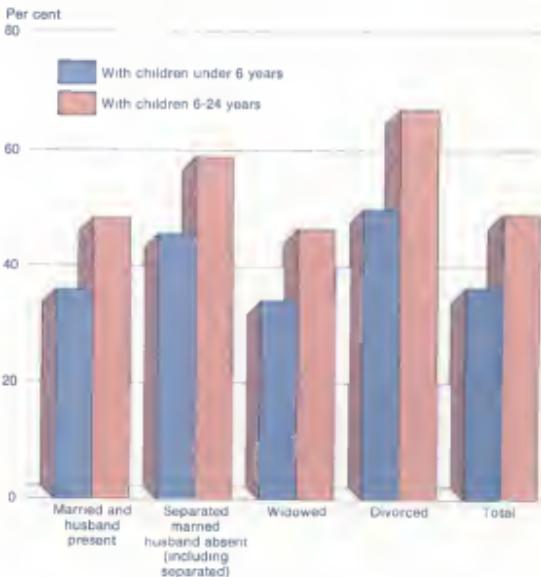
market activity, partly because the majority are in their prime working age and partly because they must support themselves. Although many divorced women receive alimony some may work in order to supplement their income.

In general, mothers with pre-school children are relatively less active in the labour market than those with school age children. But almost one-half of the divorced and separated women with pre-school youngsters are

either working or looking for jobs. As day care facilities improve and other working conditions become favourable to the needs of mothers of young children, this work pattern could become popular for all mothers.

Chart 5

Labour Force Participation Rates of Ever-married Females, by Presence of Husband and Children, Canada, 1976



Source: 1976 Census of Canada, unpublished data (based on private occupied dwellings)

## Fertility and work activity

Women in the labour force tend to have fewer children than those not in the labour force. The 1971 Census showed that the average number of children born to ever-married women 15-44 was appreciably lower at every age group for those who had worked, than those who had not worked since January 1, 1970. The same pattern was true for women 45 and over who had completed their childbearing. The 1961 Census data also show a similar relationship.

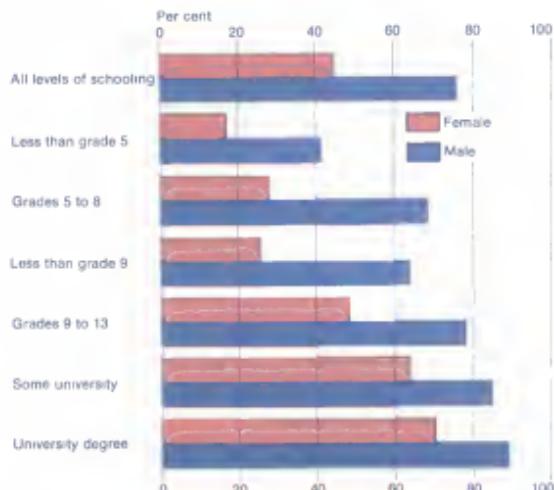
## Better educated women are more likely to work outside the home

Education exerts a powerful influence on determining whether or not a woman enters the labour market. Of all women with university degrees in 1976, more than two-thirds of them were in

the labour force compared with about one-half of women with Grades 9 to 13, and only one-quarter of the females with less than Grade 9.

Chart 6

### Labour Force Participation Rates by Level of Schooling and Sex, Canada, 1976



Source: 1976 Census of Canada, unpublished data

Fewer women than men have university degrees, but those women with degrees are entering the labour market at a much faster rate than their male counterparts. Education plays an important part in determining the careers that people pursue and ultimately, how much they earn.

In recent years, more and more women have been attending universities with increasing numbers studying for professional degrees (such as law and medicine) and many of them pursuing post-graduate studies. This impact on the labour force may be seen in the near future.

# Unemployment: Why so High?



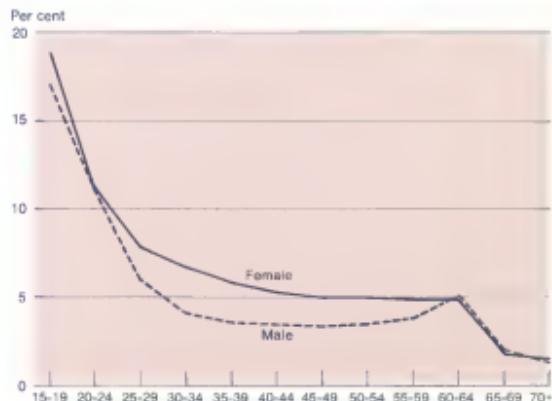
## Higher unemployment among the young

The female labour force is characterized by relatively high unemployment, especially among the younger age groups. For example, teenage females (15-19) in 1976 had a higher unemployment rate (18.8%) than the national average for all females (8.6%). Although teenage males also have a relatively high unemployment rate (17.1% as opposed to 6.4% for all males), their rate is lower than that for teenage females.

Job prospects, however, become progressively better for women and men in higher age groups. The unemployment rate drops sharply for persons aged 20-24 and 25-29. Because of job experience and perhaps better education and/or training persons 20-64 are more employable. When compared to men, women of all ages (except those aged 60-69) experience a higher incidence of joblessness.

Chart 7

### Unemployment Rates\* by Age and Sex, Canada, 1976



\*The unemployment rate here refers to the month of June 1976.

Source: 1976 Census of Canada, unpublished data.

## Marital status and unemployment

Single and separated females encounter the problem of unemployment more than females in other marital status groups. Increasing numbers of them are joining the labour market but most of them are young and lack experience and training. Job opportunities for single and separated females are limited be-

cause they may be competing for the same types of jobs within a narrow range of occupations. Also, married women, for example, can consider withdrawing from the labour force if they experience employment difficulties. But single and separated women cannot afford to resort to such an option.

Table 3

## Female Unemployment Rates\* by Marital Status, Canada, 1976

Single	Married, husband present	Married, husband absent (including separated)	Widowed	Divorced
12.2	7.0	9.2	5.1	7.4

\*The unemployment rate here refers to the month of June 1976.

Source 1976 Census of Canada, unpublished data (based on private occupied dwellings)

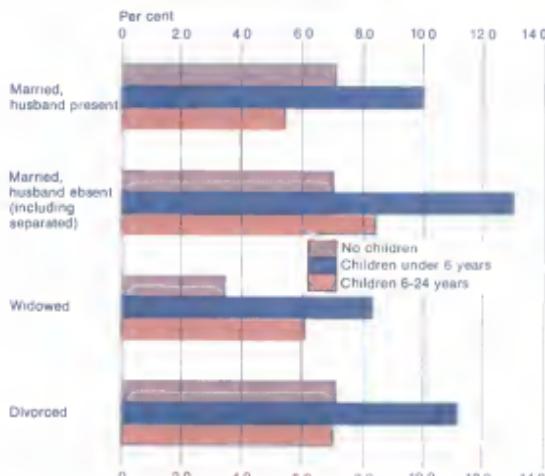
### Unemployment high among mothers of pre-school children

Mothers with pre-school children experience difficulty in finding suitable employment. For example, the unemployment rate for those mothers with husbands present and with children under 6 was 10.0% in 1976. The unemployment rate for women in the same marital status group but with older children (6-24) was only 5.4%. Furthermore,

married women with children under 6, who are separated from their husbands (or whose husbands are absent), have the highest unemployment rate (13.0%) among the marital status groups. If suitable working conditions were provided the unemployment rate for mothers with pre-school children might be lower.

Chart 8

## Female Unemployment Rates\* by Marital Status and by Presence of Children, Canada, 1976



\*The unemployment rate here refers to the month of June 1976.

Source 1976 Census of Canada, unpublished data (based on private occupied dwellings)

### **Women with higher education do better in employment market**

It may be difficult for women with pre-school children to find jobs because they may be seeking jobs with working conditions which permit them to care for their young children. These con-

ditions include shorter working hours, part-time work and day care facilities that are conveniently located within or near the employer's premises.

Education is a major factor in reducing the incidence of joblessness. For example, women 25-34 who are seeking a job and have a university degree are more likely to find work

than women in the same age group but with lower levels of schooling. This advantage improves progressively with age until they reach 65.

# Where Women Work and What They Do



Three main industrial sectors	In broad terms, all industries are grouped according to three sectors: the primary sector, including agriculture, forestry, fishing and trapping, and mines; the secondary sector, consisting of manufacturing and construction; and the tertiary sector,	covering transportation, communication and other utilities, trade, finance, community, business and personal services, and public administration.
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2.1 million women in tertiary sector	Of the three sectors, the tertiary has been expanding rapidly in recent years. In 1971, it was the most important employer, ac-	counting for almost three-quarters of all female workers and one-half of all male employees in the country.
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Table 4

Numerical and Percentage Distribution of Female and Male Workers, by Industry Sectors, Canada, 1971

	Primary		Secondary		Tertiary		Unspecified <sup>(1)</sup>		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Females	125,185	4.2	430,975	14.6	2,103,815	71.0	301,240	10.2	2,961,215	100.0
Males	594,860	10.5	1,814,585	32.0	2,875,575	50.8	380,700	6.7	8,626,925	100.0

<sup>(1)</sup>Includes persons who did not give the name of their employer and those respondents whose information was inadequate for identifying an industry.

Source: Zatko, J.A. 1978, *The Industrial Structure of Canada's Labour Force, 1971 Census Profile Studies*, Catalogue 99-715, p. 2.

431,000 women in the secondary sector	Within the tertiary sector, far more women than men work in community, business and personal services. This subsector includes industries where historically females find it easier to get jobs. Some of the services in this subsector are: barber and beauty shops, laundries, photographic services, computer op-	erations, health and welfare services, schools, advertising, etc. The only other subsector in which female workers outnumber male workers is the finance, insurance and real estate industry. In all the other industrial activities, women employees form a minority group.
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431,000 women in the secondary sector	Within the secondary sector the manufacturing industries employed most of the women. In 1971, the proportion of women to men workers was the smallest (7.2%) in industries such as primary metal, wood, petroleum	and coal products industries. But women formed the largest proportion (68.0%) of the labour force in industries such as tobacco products, knitting mills and clothing industries.
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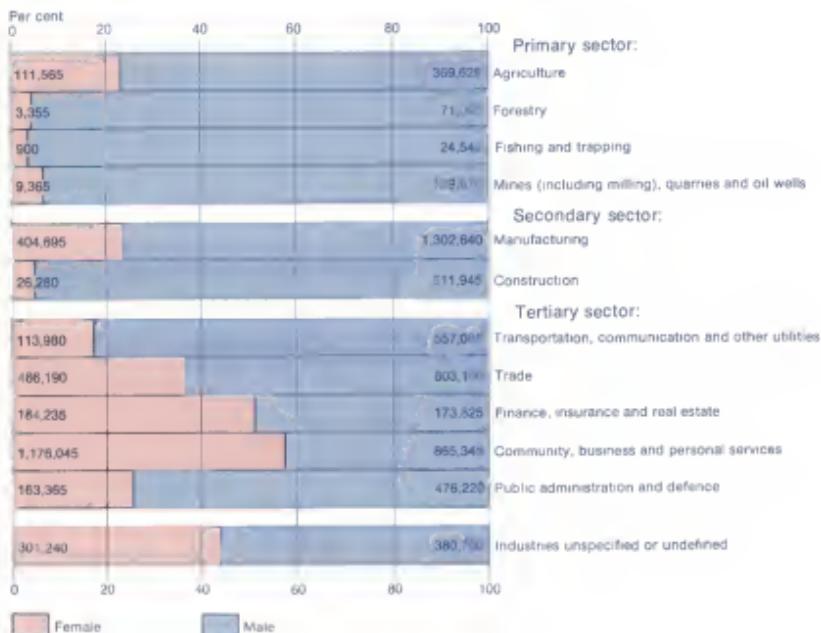
. . . and 125,200 in the primary sector

The primary sector deals mainly with Canada's raw products. And it accounts for the smallest proportion of female workers.

Within this sector, the great majority of women (89.1%) worked in agriculture. In contrast, mines, quarries and oil wells employed only 7.5% of those women in 1971.

Chart 9

Numerical and Percentage Distribution of Females and Males 15 Years and Over in the Labour Force, by Industry Sectors and Divisions, Canada, 1971



Source: 1971 Census of Canada, Catalogue 94-740, Table 2

### Women in narrow range of industries

Why are women workers concentrated in such a narrow range of industries, in particular, service industries? Why so few in construction, mines, fishing and trapping, and forestry? Do they have the same opportunity or choice as men in deciding where to work and what to do?

In a number of other countries, the proportion of women engaged in mining, construction, and manufacturing industries is relatively large. Occupational segregation is one of the main factors underlying the industrial distribution of the female and male workers.

## Most women in clerical and service jobs

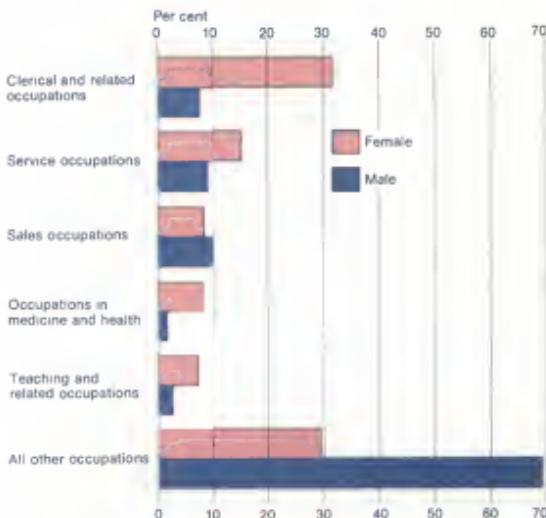
In 1971, there were almost three million female workers and nearly 71% of them were engaged in five of the 22 major occupational classifications. The corresponding figure for men in these same occupations was 31.0% (out of a total of 5.7 million).

Almost one-third (31.7%) of all female employees in 1971 were

in clerical and related occupations. Less than one-tenth (7.6%) of all male workers were in this category. Service occupations were the next leading category for females, attracting one-seventh (15.1%) of total females in the labour force. Among males, meanwhile, 10.0% were in sales occupations and 9.9% worked in the construction trades.

Chart 10

### Percentage Distribution of Female and Male Workers, by Five Major Female Occupations, Canada, 1971



Source: Montigny, G. 1978. *The Occupational Composition of Canada's Labour Force, 1971 Census Profile Studies*. Catalogue 89-718, p. 13

## About 500 different job groups . . .

Each major occupation category is composed of many different types of jobs called "unit groups" by the Census of Canada. These account for specific tasks and responsibilities. The unit groups are too numerous to list here, but two illustrations will serve

our purpose. Clerical and related occupations include typists, stenographers, bookkeepers, tellers and cashiers and general office clerks. The medicine and health group covers those occupations basically concerned with the treating and nursing of the ill.

... but many women still do traditional type jobs

This category includes physicians, pharmacists, veterinarians,

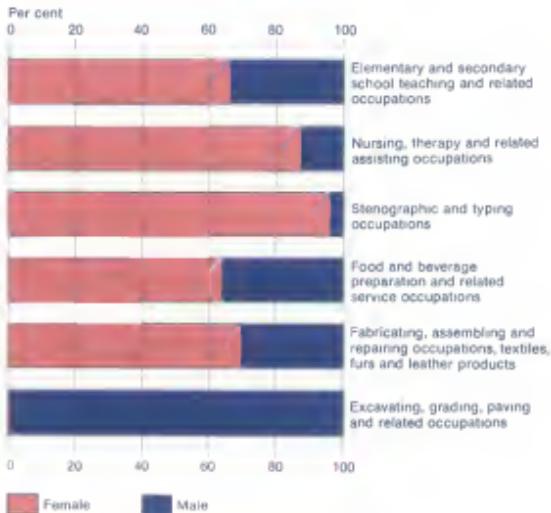
nurses, nursing aides and physiotherapists.

In earlier times the traditional tasks of women were associated with child care, preparing meals, cleaning, making of clothes, care of the ill and education. Today, many of these services are supplied outside the home, but the majority of persons providing these services are women. For example, 87.7% of all workers in nursing and related occupations are

females, but in health diagnosis and treating occupations which includes physicians and surgeons, only 10.5% are females. Similarly, in the fabricating of textile, fur and leather products, 70.0% of the workers are women. On the other hand, in the excavating, grading, paving and related construction occupations, women workers represent less than one per cent.

Chart 11

Percentage Distribution of Female and Male Workers in Six Selected Occupational Minor Groups, Canada, 1971



Source: 1971 Census of Canada, Catalogue 94-717, Table 2

Equal job opportunity legislation (introduced in the late 1960s), coupled with the growing numbers of women workers, will encourage more women to do what was traditionally known as "men's work". There has already been an enormous in-

crease in the women's share of the clerical group of occupations, previously a male stronghold. In 1901 over three-quarters of Canada's clerical workforce was male. By 1971 over two-thirds (68.4%) of all clerical workers were females.

**Women have lower level jobs**

More women than men are in the lower level jobs, even in occupations that are considered predominantly female. Over 60% of persons in teaching and related occupations, for example, are females, but only 17.8% of them have positions at the university level (the corresponding percentage for males is 82.2%). Furthermore, almost three-quar-

ters (74.3%) of the persons working in medicine and health occupations are women. Yet, in the health diagnosing and treating occupations (which consist mainly of physicians and surgeons), women represent only 10.5% of the workers (men represent 89.5%). On the other hand, almost all stenographers and typists (96.8%) are females.

Table 5

**Numerical and Percentage Distribution of Female and Male Workers in Four Selected Occupational Groups, Canada, 1971**

Occupation	Females		Males		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
All occupations	2,961,210	34.3	5,665,720	65.7	8,626,925	100.0
Clerical and related occupations	940,180	68.4	433,385	31.6	1,373,565	100.0
Stenographic and typing occupations	326,895	96.8	10,750	3.2	337,645	100.0
Material recording, scheduling and distributing occupations	23,730	15.2	132,140	84.8	155,875	100.0
Occupations in medicine and health	242,690	74.3	83,865	25.7	326,555	100.0
Health diagnosing and treating occupations	4,105	10.5	35,005	89.5	39,110	100.0
Teaching and related occupations	211,125	60.4	138,170	39.6	349,295	100.0
University teaching and related occupations	4,715	17.8	21,770	82.2	26,485	100.0
Technical, social and cultural occupations	72,240	17.3	345,015	82.7	417,260	100.0
Architects and engineers	1,335	1.6	79,585	98.4	80,920	100.0

Source: Montigny, G. 1978, *The Occupational Composition of Canada's Labour Force, 1971 Census Profile Studies*, Catalogue 99-718, p. 13.

# A Gap in Employment Income?



## Female and male earnings: an income gap?

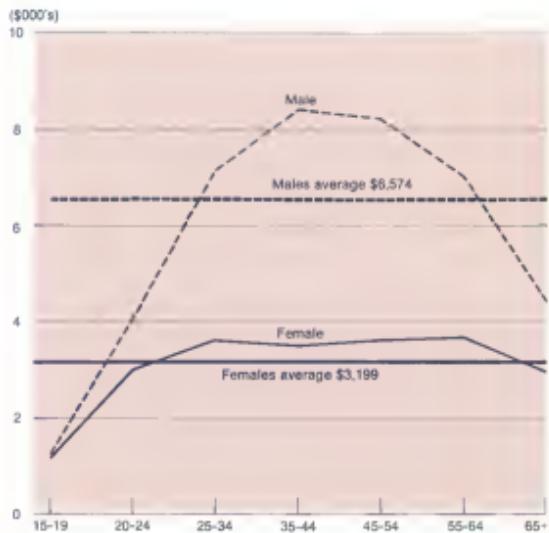
The average employment income of a woman worker in 1970 was \$3,199. The average income for a man worker was more than twice as much at \$6,574. This difference between female and male incomes is supported by more recent data. The Survey of Consumer Finances revealed that in 1976 among individuals whose main source of income was wages and salaries, women had an average income of \$6,435 (gross) and men \$13,352 (gross). Although 1970

and 1976 figures are not directly comparable, they indicate that there is a gap in average male-female earnings.

Data from both the 1971 Census and the 1977 Survey of Consumer Finances show that the largest absolute differences in income occur for those female and male workers aged 35-44 (differences of \$4,940 in 1970, as reported by the census and \$10,213 in 1976, as reported by the survey).

Chart 12

Average Employment Income of Females and Males Who Worked in 1970, by Age Group, Canada



Source: 1971 Census of Canada, Catalogue 94-764, Table 11.

## Incomes and occupation

Occupational categories also show big differences in income between women and men. Even in occupations where there are more female than male workers differences exist.

The largest discrepancy occurs among those working in medicine and health. Since men make up the majority of physicians and surgeons, and women the majority of nurses, this income differential is not surprising.

Also, fewer women worked for most of the year (49-52 weeks). In 1970, 58.8% of all male employees worked for this period of time on a full-time basis, compared with only 39.3% of female workers.

Another factor is that women work in a narrower range of jobs. And more women than men do lower paid jobs. Most doctors and university professors, for example, are men, while most nurses and elementary school teachers are women.

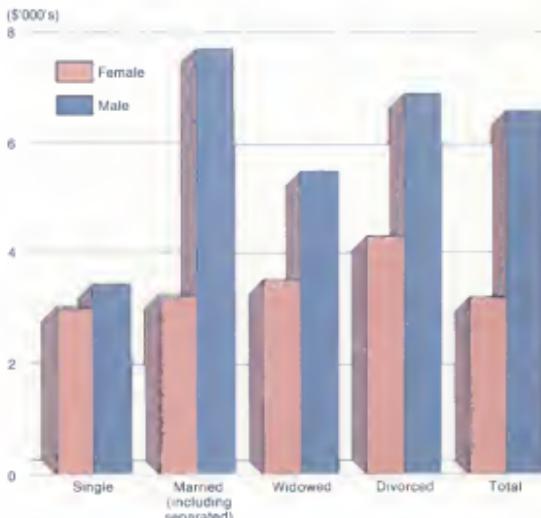
### Marriage and income

In addition, marriage and a family have the opposite effect on men's and women's earnings. For women, marriage and raising children tend to lead to a higher rate of job turnover and possibly more breaks which interrupt their work experience. Most married men, however, are associated with job continuity and longer work experience, thus, higher earnings. The 1971 Census showed that the aver-

age employment income of married men was more than twice that of married women. Although data from the Survey of Consumer Finances differ from those of the census, a large income gap is also shown for married women and married men 15 years and over (the census recorded \$4,489 for 1970; the Survey of Consumer Finances reported \$9,363 for 1976).

Chart 13

Average Employment Income of Females and Males Who Worked in 1970, by Marital Status, Canada



Source: David, J.-F. and Lux, A. 1978. *Employment Income in Canada, 1971 Census Profile Studies*, Catalogue 99-720, p. 39, Table 15.

Table 6

Average 1970 Employment Income  
of Females and Males  
Who Worked Full-time and Full-year,  
in Five Major Female Occupational  
Categories, Canada

	Average employment income		
	Females	Males	Average employ- ment income differential
1 Clerical and related occupations	\$ 4,699	\$ 7,059	\$ 2,360
2 Service	3,326	6,685	3,359
3 Sales	3,960	8,380	4,420
4 Medicine and health Nursing, therapy and related assisting occupations	5,641	16,347	10,706
Health diagnosing and treating occupations	5,499	6,046	547
5 Teaching and related occupations	13,109	26,950	13,841
University teaching and related occupations	7,403	10,507	3,104
Elementary and secondary school teaching and related occupations	10,810	15,195	4,385
	7,325	9,514	2,189

Source: 1971 Census of Canada, Catalogue 94-767, Table 18.

Income differences exist among men and women in the same professional subcategory. In 1970, for example, females who taught at universities had an average income of \$10,810, while male university teachers had an

average income of \$15,195. These differences, however, are to be expected since men had an earlier start in university careers than women and so are more likely to be in the senior positions.

Why do female workers earn less than male workers?

Several factors account for income differences. One reason is that more women than men work part-time. For the year 1970, 28.3% of women who earned incomes were employed part-time. Only 11.2% of men, however,

worked part-time. The average income of part-time workers was \$1,518 for females and \$2,341 for males. Women working on a full-time basis earned, on the average, \$3,864 whereas men made \$7,111.

No single reason adequately explains the difference in earnings between men and women. The income gap, however, does raise several important issues. One of

these is, how much of the income gap is reflected in occupational differences and how much reflects discrimination?

### Income and education

At all educational levels, income differences are shown between working women and working men. The largest gap, however, is shown for those persons with university degrees. The Survey of Consumer Finances showed a similar pattern—the difference between average incomes for

female and male individuals with degrees was \$11,888 in 1976.

Education is an important determinant of income and increased earnings, but work experience and seniority play a large part in accounting for income differences between females and males.

Table 7

#### Average Employment Income of Females and Males Who Worked in 1970, by Schooling, Canada, 1971

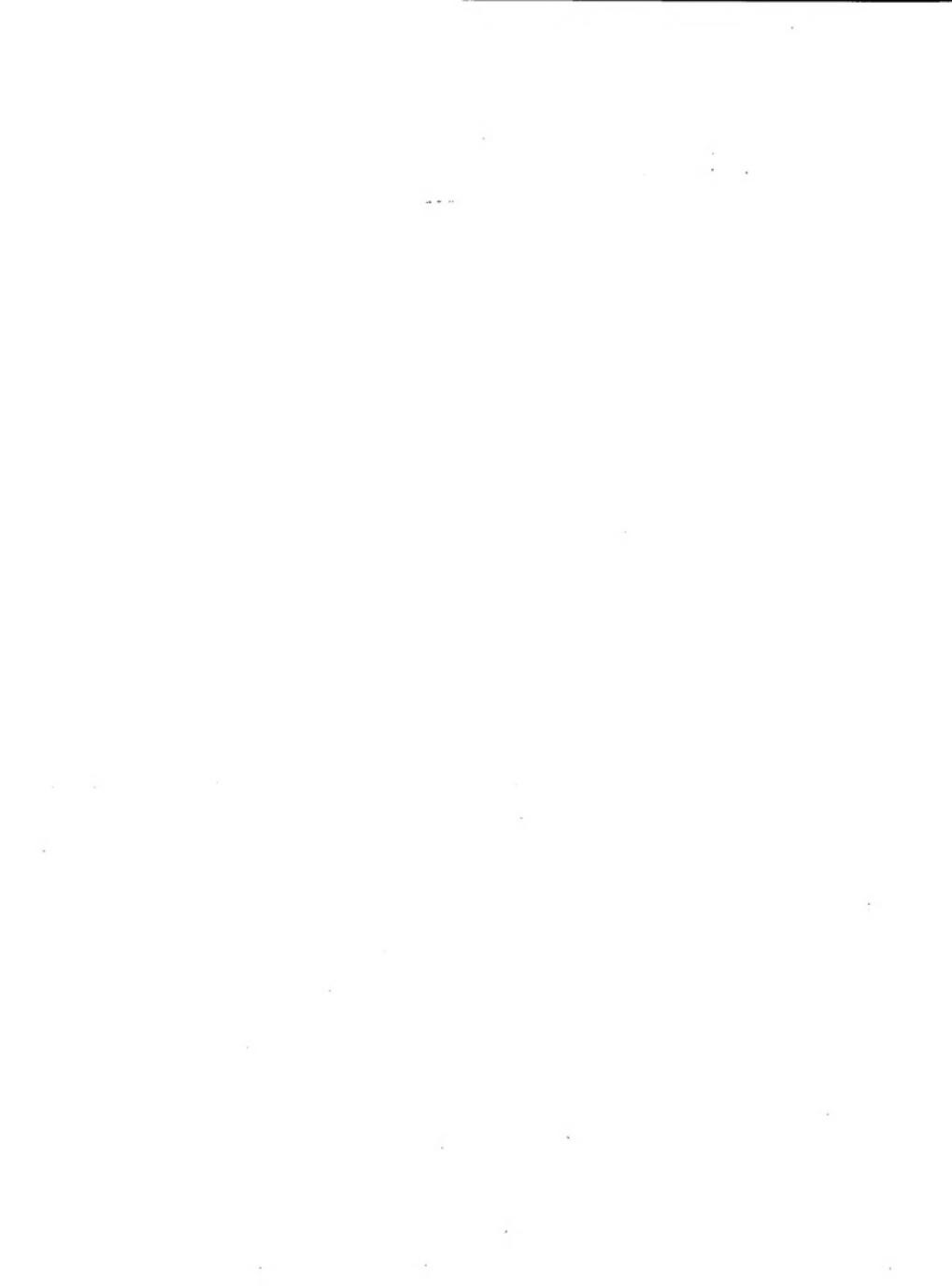
	Less than Grade 5	Grades 5 to 8	Grades 9 and 10	Grade 11	Grades 12 and 13	University degree
Females	\$2,588	\$2,596	\$2,734	\$3,095	\$3,395	\$5,852
Males	4,577	5,671	6,124	6,266	6,822	12,176
Income differential	1,989	3,075	3,390	3,171	3,427	6,324

Source: David, J.-F. and Lux, A. 1978, *Employment Income in Canada, 1971 Census Profile Studies*, Catalogue 99-720, p. 58, Table 22.

Many women work to supplement husband's income

A greater percentage of wives from lower and middle income families are in the labour force than are wives from higher income families. In 1971, the participation rate of married women with family incomes of \$3,000 or less was almost twice as high as that for wives with family in-

comes of \$15,000 or more. Wives of men whose earnings are relatively small may have to work to supplement the family income. Many women, however, may work in order to achieve or maintain a higher standard of living rather than as a direct response to possible poverty.



## The Outlook

The role of the working women is changing rapidly with major demographic, economic and social changes. Canada's changing age structure with its resultant slowdown of the growth in the working age population could lead to higher female participation rates. Under favourable economic conditions this trend may accelerate with a growing demand for woman workers. Factors such as part-time work, flexible working hours and increased availability of day care centres would be necessary to motivate more of Canada's mothers to enter the labour force.

In the past, the presence or absence of a young child has been one of the most important factors affecting the participation rate of married women. However, the steady decline in birth rates since the 1960s has meant that more married women are now in a position to go to work. No longer constrained by large families and the associated problems, many women are already opting to join the labour force. And many of these women are able to combine effectively the role of "homemaker" and "worker".

If present trends continue, we can expect over half of all women aged 15 and over to be in the labour force by early 1980. In the United States, about half of all adult women are already working or seeking jobs. The labour market participation rates of women are much higher in countries like Russia, Israel and Sweden.

However, the massive influx of women into the labour force in recent years is unlikely to be repeated in this century. The proportion entering the labour force is expected to level off by the 1990s. But other important changes may occur. Since more and more women are standing

university and increasing numbers are graduating with professional degrees they will tend to command better jobs and higher wage rates. Further, women working in a narrow range of industries and occupations may become a thing of the past as increasing numbers of them qualify as lawyers, physicians and scientists. Male-dominated occupations may become less prominent as more women compete with men on an equal footing.

In addition to the economic implications, the phenomenal rise in the participation of married women in the labour force has undoubtedly had some effect on family life and marital relationships. Will these changes threaten the stability of marriage, the well-being of children and the wage rates and job security of men? A possible outcome of the large rise in the number of married women entering the labour force could be the trend towards more men staying at home, while their wives pursue a career. There is some evidence that this is already happening in the United States, and especially in Sweden where labour laws have made it possible for both wife and husband to share equally the home responsibilities, including caring for their young children.

The census data show that Canada's working women are a significant part of the labour force. Today, about half of all working age women are still outside the labour market as compared with less than one-quarter of the adult men. Married women constitute the largest group of these women outside the labour force. With a rise in the labour force participation rate of married women, we can expect the female labour force to continue growing in numbers and importance in the near future.



Canada has taken a census of population every 10 years from 1851 and every five years from 1956. The last census was taken on June 1, 1976. The census data constitute the most important single source of information on the population of Canada by many geographic areas from the national and provincial levels down to smaller groups such as cities, towns and municipalities. These data include: information on the number of people who live in Canada; their characteristics such as age, sex, marital status, language, educational level and occupation; number and types of families; and types of dwellings. Census information is used for a variety of purposes by private individuals, governments at all levels, educational institutions, business people and other organizations.

As part of a programme to supplement 1976 Census statistical

reports, a special series of popular studies has been undertaken on selected topics of public interest. Each study is a description of major trends and patterns. The data used are from the 1976 Census and other relevant sources. This series is deliberately non-technical and is designed for use at the high school and community college/university levels. However, it could also be of interest to the general public and other groups, such as public libraries, media, politicians, community and neighbourhood groups, marketing people and educational publishers.

**Canada's Female Labour Force** is the fourth in this series. It provides a profile of those women in the labour force, the work they do and what they are paid.

Produced by the Social Statistics Field and the Information Division of Statistics Canada.

Many persons contributed to the production of this series. Edward Pryor was the originator of the project. It was carried out under the direction of Anatole Romaniec, project manager and M. V. George, project leader.

The manuscript for this study was prepared in the Social Statistics Field by Kebebew

Ashagrie and LeRoy Murray. A number of professionals from the Field made a valuable contribution in reviewing the manuscript.

Stan Boswell supervised the editing of the manuscript and Jim Power co-ordinated the design and artwork.

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